1   WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1   1.   A method for image processing, the method comprising:

2   identifying candidate edge chains in an image being processed;

3   determining a dynamic chain-based threshold function that is dependent on at

4   least one characteristic of the image being processed;

5   applying the dynamic chain-based threshold function to the candidate edge

6   chains; and

7   removing from a set of edge chains those candidate edge chains that fail to

8   pass the dynamic chain-based threshold function.

1   2.   The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one characteristic of the

2   image comprises a global characteristic of the image.

1   3.   The method of claim 2, wherein the at least one characteristic of the

2   image comprises a plurality of characteristics of the image.

1   4.   The method of claim 2, wherein the global characteristic comprises a

2   global measure of color variation that is calculated over an image.

1   5.   The method of claim 4, wherein the global measure comprises a mean

2   measure of the color variation.

1   6.   The method of claim 4, wherein the global measure comprises a

2   median measure of the color variation.

1   7.   The method of claim 4, wherein the global measure is calculated over

2   the candidate edge chains within the image.

1   8.   The method of claim 2, wherein the dynamic chain-based threshold

2   function comprises a linear function of the global characteristic.

1   9.   An apparatus for image processing, the apparatus comprising:

2   a candidate edge chain identifier for identifying candidate edge chains in an

3   image being processed;

4   means for determining a dynamic chain-based threshold function that is

5 dependent on at least one characteristic of the image being processed; and

6   a threshold applicator for applying the dynamic chain-based threshold function

7 to the candidate edge chains.

1   10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the at least one characteristic of the

2 image comprises a global characteristic of the image.

1   11. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the global characteristic comprises

2 a global measure of color variation that is calculated over an image.

1   12. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the global measure comprises a

2 mean measure of the color variation.

1   13. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the global measure comprises a

2 median measure of the color variation.

1   14. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the global measure is calculated

2 over the candidate edge chains within the image.

1   15. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the dynamic chain-based threshold

2 function comprises a linear function of the global characteristic.

1   16. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the apparatus comprises a video

2 encoder.

1   17. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the video encoder is configured to

2 operate cooperatively with a video decoder, and wherein the video decoder also comprises

3 the edge identifier, the means for determining, and the thresholder.

1   18. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the apparatus comprises a video

2 decoder.

1   19. A method for processing an image, the method comprises:

2   determining a dynamic chain-based threshold function that is dependent on at

3 least one global characteristic of the image being processed; and

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4   applying the dynamic chain-based threshold function to a candidate edge

5   chain.

1   20.   A system for image processing, the system comprising:

2   an encoder that includes a candidate edge chain identifier for identifying

3   candidate edge chains in an image being processed, means for calculating a dynamic chain-

4   based threshold function that is dependent on at least one characteristic of the image being

5   processed, and a threshold applicator for applying the dynamic chain-based threshold

6   function to the candidate edge chains; and

7   a decoder configured to operate in cooperation with the encoder, wherein the

8   decoder also includes the candidate edge chain, the means for, and the threshold applicator.